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R. H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

U R B A N D I S T R I C T O F B U R N H A M - O N - S E A

BUILDING AND SANITARY COMMITTEE 1955

Chairman:

MR. T.F.S. FORSE

MR. J.R.A. COURTENAY

MR. O.H. HOLLEY

MR. G.W. GULLIFORD

MR. L.B. KNIGHT

MRS. E.E.J. HERRING

MRS. W.G. TROWBRIDGE

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF 1955

Medical Officer of Health:

R.H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

Building and Sanitary Inspector:

W.B. GRAHAM, M.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.

Housing Officer and Assistant Sanitary Inspector:

H.F. ROBINSON, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1955

Health Department,
Albert Street,
BRIDGWATER.

August, 1956.

To:-

The Chairman and Members of the
Burnham-on-Sea Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1955. The report contains the usual information on the health and sanitary circumstances of the district, and is laid out in the same manner as previous reports, so as to facilitate comparison with previous years.

During the year the district remained free from serious epidemics and the high standard of health which has been enjoyed by the people was maintained. Indeed, the vital statistics compare very favourably with those which would be expected from a progressive and healthy community living in a satisfactory environment

The diphtheria immunisation campaign has been intensified and, as will be seen later in the report, there has been a satisfactory response from parents.

The appointment of Mr. H.F. Robinson as Housing Officer and Additional Sanitary Inspector is welcomed, as it will enable the Council to fully implement their responsibilities under the various Housing Acts.

Once again I wish to thank the Members of the Council, and Clerk, and Officials of other departments, and the Staff of the Public Health Department for their willing assistance and co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R.H. WATSON,

Medical Officer of Health.



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SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

Area (including foreshore) = 2,246 acres

Population:- Registrar General's estimate for 1955 ... 9,630

Rateable value = £75,706

Sum represented by a penny rate = £296

GENERAL STATISTICS

Registered Live Births

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Legitimate	123	65	58
Illegitimate	6	4	2
	<u>129</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>60</u>

Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated population 13.50

Still Births 4

Legitimate 3
Illegitimate 1

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births 30.08

Deaths

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
	117	67	50

Crude Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated population 12.15

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age

All infants	3.	Rate per 1,000 live births	23.72
Legitimate infants	3.	Rate per 1,000 legitimate live births	24.39

VITAL STATISTICS

Births.

After allowing for inward and outward transfers the Registrar General's figure for the Urban District was 129 live births, and of these 69 were male and 60 female. This gave a Birth Rate of 13.50, which when corrected for age and sex distribution of the population gave a Standardised Birth Rate of 15.39. As a comparison the rate for England and Wales was 15.0.

Deaths.

After correction for transferable deaths the total assigned to the District was 117, which showed little change from the previous year, and was made up of 67 males and 50 females. The Crude Death Rate was 12.15, but when Standardised this became 8.63, while the comparative figure for England and Wales was 11.7.

Out of the total of 117 deaths, 74 occurred in persons over the age of 70 years. The primary cause of death was again heart disease (43), with cancer second (14).

The following table shows the cause of death and the sex distribution:-

CAUSE OF DEATH	M.	F.	TOTAL
ALL CAUSES	67	50	117
1. Tuberculosis, respiratory	1	-	1
2. Tuberculosis, other	-	-	-
3. Syphilitic disease	-	-	-
4. Diphtheria	-	-	-
5. Whooping cough	-	-	-
6. Meningococcal infections	-	-	-
7. Acute poliomyelitis	-	-	-
8. Measles	1	-	1
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	1	-	1
10. Malignant neoplasm - stomach	-	1	1
11. Malignant neoplasm - lung, bronchus	3	-	3
12. Malignant neoplasm - breast	-	2	2
13. Malignant neoplasm - uterus	-	1	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	5	2	7
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	-	-
16. Diabetes	1	-	1
17. Vascular lesions of the nervous system	2	8	10
18. Coronary disease, angina	14	8	22
19. Hypertension with heart disease	2	-	2
20. Other heart disease	8	11	19
21. Other circulatory disease	5	6	11
22. Influenza	5	1	6
23. Pneumonia	2	-	2
24. Bronchitis	3	2	5
25. Other diseases of the respiratory system	2	-	2
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	-	-	-
27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	-	2	2
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	1	-	1
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	-	-	-
30. Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	-	-	-
31. Congenital malformations	-	-	-
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	8	6	14
33. Motor vehicle accidents	-	-	-
34. All other accidents	2	-	2
35. Suicide	1	-	1
36. Homicide and operations of war	-	-	-

The Death Rate for England and Wales and the Crude Death Rate for the Urban District during the past ten years was as follows:-

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
England and Wales	11.5	12.0	10.8	11.7	11.6	12.5	11.3	11.4	11.3	11.7
Burnham U.D.	13.2	13.8	11.7	12.5	14.01	17.77	13.18	13.33	13.36	12.15

Infant Mortality.

The number of infants dying within the first 12 months of life was 3, as compared with 5 in the previous year.

Cause of death:-

<u>Cause</u>	<u>Number</u>
Prematurity	1
Anoxic cerebral haemorrhage	1
Atelectasis	1

Age of death:-

Under 24 hours	under 1 week	1 month or under	under 1 year over 1 month
1	2	-	-

Infectious Diseases.

The following table sets out the details of infectious diseases notified during the year and also the figures for the previous years.

Disease	1955	1954
Measles	175	-
Scarlet fever	9	15
Whooping cough	22	42
Pneumonia	2	11
Poliomyelitis	1	-
Puerperal pyrexia	-	1
Erysipelas	1	1
	210	70

Poliomyelitis.

I am glad to report that only one case of this condition was notified during the year, whereas in the County as a whole there were 99 cases.

Diphtheria and Whooping Cough Immunisation.

The campaign to increase the percentage of children immunised against diphtheria was intensified and the following table shows the number of children protected, with the corresponding figures for the previous year in brackets.

<u>Aged under 5 years.</u>	<u>Aged 5 - 15 years.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
122 (136)	36 (43)	158 (179)

It is possible to combine immunisation against whooping cough with immunisation against diphtheria, and this combined vaccine is now being used on an increasing scale, where it is requested by parents. Modern treatment has tended to reduce the severity of whooping cough, but nevertheless it is at present the most serious infectious disease from which children in this country usually suffer, and complications which frequently arise may have lifelong effects. The greatest danger is when very young infants are affected and in order to protect them it is essential that any scheme of immunisation against whooping cough should be completed at an early age. In this area it has therefore been decided that when parents wish to have their children immunised with the combined vaccine against diphtheria and whooping cough, the course of injections should be commenced at the age of four months, instead of the more usual age of nine months when protecting against diphtheria alone. With the vaccine in common use, protection against whooping cough is not always complete, but in those children who may subsequently contract the disease the severity of the attack is often diminished.

Diphtheria.

No case of diphtheria was notified. This satisfactory state of affairs is almost entirely due to the nation wide immunisation campaign which was begun in 1942. The following table shows the incidence and number of deaths from diphtheria in England and Wales since 1945, and clearly shows the progress which has been made.

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Deaths.</u>	<u>Corrected Notifications.</u>
1945	722	18,596
1946	472	11,986
1947	244	5,609
1948	156	3,575
1949	84	1,890
1950	49	962
1951	33	664
1952	32	376
1953	23	266
1954	9	173
1955	11 ≠	161 ≠

≠ = provisional

Vaccination.

The number of children vaccinated or revaccinated during the year was 44, as compared with 58 for the previous year.

Under 1 year		1 to 4 years		5 to 14 years		15 years or over	
P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R
37	-	4	2	-	1	2	12

P = Primary vaccination. R = Re-vaccination.

Vaccination is now voluntary, but the value of individual vaccination is, in my opinion, undiminished and I would advise all parents to have their children vaccinated, preferably at about the age of four months.

Tuberculosis.

Four new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were notified, as compared with eight in the previous year. This is particularly gratifying as although in recent years there has been a marked reduction in the number of deaths from tuberculosis, this is the first year that there has been a corresponding reduction in the notification of new cases. One case of non-respiratory tuberculosis was also notified.

New cases notified:-

<u>Age Periods</u>	<u>Respiratory</u>	<u>Non-Respiratory</u>
Under 5 years	-	-
5 - 14 "	-	-
15 - 24 "	-	1
25 - 44 "	3	-
45 - 64 "	1	-
65 and over	-	-
Total all ages	4	1

The search for positive cases amongst the contacts of known cases is well carried out and advantage is taken of the visits by the Mass Radiography Units for chest X-ray of members of the public.

The Mass Radiography Unit visited the District in November and 1,102 people were X-rayed. No case of active tuberculosis was discovered, but three inactive cases were brought to light.

Tuberculous Conditions.

	Male	Female	Total
Inactive Tuberculosis	-	3	3

Analysis of Inactive Tuberculous Cases.

Age	Under 15	15/24	25/34	35/44	45/59	60 & over	Total
Male							
Female		2			1		3

National Assistance Act.

No action was taken under Section 47 of the above Act. However, a number of cases were dealt with by informal action. Here tribute must be paid to the excellent work being done by the Home Help Service which is administered by the County Council. Without the assistance of the Home Helps, at times working under the most appalling conditions, it is difficult to see how some old people could have been looked after in their own homes. In the District 8 full time and 6 part time Home Helps are employed, and during the year they attended 57 cases.

Housing.

During the year 10 permanent houses were erected by the Local Authority, and 36 by Private Enterprise. A further 15 houses were under construction by the Local Authority and 18 by Private Enterprise. The Local Authority have built 381 Post War Houses, and the number of applicants for rehousing at the end of the year was 265.

The appointment of an additional sanitary inspector enabled the Council to survey their area and to identify the houses in respect of which it will be necessary to take action under the slum clearance programme. After inspection 29 houses were included and it is the Council's intention to deal with them within the five year period.

In addition to this slum clearance programme it will now be necessary for the Council to consider the measures that are necessary to secure, where appropriate, the repair of houses which are unfit for human habitation, but which can be made fit at reasonable cost.

SANITARY CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

1. Water Supply.

The water supply to the District was satisfactory as to quality and generally also as to quantity. On no occasion was it necessary to cut off the supply, but in the peak holiday season when demand is greatest the pressure in the mains falls drastically. However, the Council's new water scheme has been completed and should eliminate any difficulties due to low pressure.

Bacteriological examination of the untreated water was carried out on 9 occasions, and of these 6 were satisfactory and 3 were unsatisfactory. Examination of the treated water was carried out on 18 occasions, and of these 17 gave an excellent result, while the remaining one was unsatisfactory.

2. Sewage Disposal.

Apart from a few isolated cases, main drainage is available throughout the area. At Highbridge conditions at the Clyce outfall are unchanged and Ministry investigation of the Council's scheme is still awaited.

3. Milk Supplies.

- (a) The number of Registered Distributors is 13.
- (b) The number of Registered Dairy Premises
(other than Dairy Farms) is 6.
- (c) The number of Licensed Dealers of Designated
milk is 10.

Three supplementary licenses have been issued to distributors whose dairies are outside the area.

Milk Sampling.

14 samples of Tuberculin Tested milk were taken and all of these were satisfactory.

8 samples of Pasteurised milk were taken, 7 of which were satisfactory and 1 unsatisfactory.

4. Ice Cream.

The number of premises registered for manufacture						
					and sale	...
For retail only	...	...	...	...	...	5
						44

The number of samples taken was as follows:-

	<u>Hot Mix.</u>	<u>Cold Mix.</u>
Grade 1	36	4
Grade 2	6	3
Grade 3	4	4
Grade 4	9	-

Sampling results have proved satisfactory and standards of cleanliness were well maintained.

5. Slaughterhouses.

Ample facilities for slaughtering are available at the abattoir at Weston-super-Mare, and consequently the only slaughterhouse in the District which is licensed is that of the Highbridge Bacon Company.

Carcases and offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part during year:-

	Cattle Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed					52,942	
Number inspected					52,942	
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned					29	
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned					1,944	
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuber- culosis and cysticerci					3.5%	
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned					3	
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned					6,422	
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis					12%	
<u>Cysticercosis</u>						
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned					-	
Carcasses submitted to treatment by refrigeration					-	
Generalised and totally condemned					-	
Weight of meat condemned (in lbs.) for:-						
(a) Tuberculosis					30,664	
(b) Cysticercosis					19,668	
(c) Other					50,332	

The system of post mortem inspection in operation is that all carcasses are thoroughly examined by well trained personnel employed by the Bacon Company. All carcasses suspected of having any abnormal condition are isolated and are examined by the Sanitary Inspector. A constant check is kept on the working of this system and full detailed examination of carcasses is carried out from time to time by the Chief Sanitary Inspector. During the year this spot check was carried out on 8,398 animals.

6. Premises where food is prepared.

The number registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act 1938, is 14. Frequent inspections are made to ensure satisfactory conditions.

7. Knackers Yard.

One knackers yard is registered in this District and is visited frequently.

8. Refuse Disposal.

Disposal of refuse is by direct tipping into disused claypits. As water accumulates in these pits unsatisfactory conditions arise from time to time, mainly with the onset of warm weather.

